

From the Consul's Desk: Demystifying the U.S. Visa Application and Interview Process

The application and interview process for a Non Immigrant visa to the United States is a fairly simple procedure. All the information can be found on our website at www.chennai.usconsulate.gov. Here is a step by step guide to what you can expect.

Your first step is to log on to the website. Click the heading "Visas to the U.S.". This is a comprehensive guide to all the information you will need as well as links to all the documents. First, you will need to find the nearest HDFC bank and get a demand draft for the visa fee and the courier fee. There is a link to find the nearest bank to you in South India under "How to Apply" "Pay Fees". You will receive a receipt with two yellow barcode stickers. Save this receipt. You will need it to schedule your appointment.

Next, log onto the website with your receipt close by. Click the link "How to Apply" then "Get the forms". Click the links for the application forms you will need. All applicants must fill out the DS 156 and DS 157. Review the forms to make sure you have all the information asked for, including any additional information pertaining to student visas or work/petition based visas. You will need this information when you Schedule Your Appointment.

Now, go back to "How to Apply" and click the link for "Schedule an Appointment". Click the link for VFS. This will redirect you to the VFS website. Do not go to the website to start your appointment scheduling until you have all your information and your HDFC receipt. You will have to wait 48 hours after paying the fees before you can schedule your appointment.

At the VFS website, click "Apply for a Non Immigrant Visa". Follow the instructions on each page. You will be asked in which language you would like to have your appointment conducted. In Chennai, we offer appointments in English, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Hindi, and Urdu. All this information is important to selecting your appointment time and date. Incorrect information on this page could lead to your appointment being cancelled or your application being refused. So be careful and honest.

Continue through the website filling in all the information as completely as possible. If you do not have a response to a question, write "nil" or "none". If someone else fills out the forms for you, make sure you review them. Your signature is the one on the form and you are the one ultimately responsible for all the information on the application. The more complete your application, the better we can help you during your interview.

After you have filled out all the information, your application will be generated and saved. You will be asked to provide an email address to which your application and appointment letter will be sent. Once you receive the email confirmation, print out your application and appointment letter. You must bring these documents with you on the day

of your interview. You must also bring the correct photo attached to your application. The photo must be on a plain white background and (51 cm by 51 cm).

On the day of your interview, please arrive at the consulate no more than 30 minutes before the time on your appointment letter. You go through security, then through pre-screening where you will have your fingerprints taken. Then you will be sent to an American Officer for the interview.

At the end of the interview, the American Officer will let you know the status of your case. There are several scenarios. If your visa is issued, it will be delivered by courier in 3 to 4 working days. Some cases may be suspended for administrative processing. This means that more work is needed on your case and there will be a delay of one week to eight weeks. If yours is such a case, you will be given a blue sheet with your case number. You can check the status of your case on our website. Once the case is cleared, you will be given further instructions. Finally, if you do not qualify for a visa, the consul will explain that fact based on the rules and regulations of the visa category for which you applied.

www.chennai.usconsulate.gov